

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY
LOK SABHA**

STARRED QUESTION NO:483

ANSWERED ON:20.04.2001

AGITATION BY FARMERS AGAINST WTO

A. VENKATESH NAIK;ASHOK NAMDEORAO MOHOL

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government are aware of the country wide dharnas staged/being staged by the farmers organisations against the agreement with World Trade Organisation;
- (b) if so, whether the farmers organisations have demanded exclusion of agriculture from the WTO;
- (c) if so, whether the farmers` organisations have also submitted any Memorandum to the Government in this regard;
- (d) if so, the reaction of the Government thereto; and
- (e) the action taken by the Government to ensure that farmers of the country are not put to loss?

Answer

MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN)

(a) to (e) : A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) TO (e) OF THE LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO.483 T
ANSWERED ON 20TH APRIL,2001 REGARDING AGITATION BY FARMERS AGAINST WTO

(a) to (c) : Yes, Sir. Some representations have been received demanding that India should strive for the exclusion of agriculture from WTO to secure its food security and policy options for agriculture and rural development. It has also been represented that WTO agreements have severely constrained our domestic policy options and have mainly benefitted the developed countries and the interests of domestic producers in developing countries have been seriously compromised.

(d) & (e) : India is a founder member of WTO which came into being on 1.1.1995 as a successor to the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade 1947 (GATT), of which also India was a founder member. The Agreement on Agriculture (AOA) is one of the Uruguay Round of Agreements which India had signed at Marrakesh in April 1994. WTO provides a predictable rule based multilateral trading system which protects the member countries from pressures of their stronger trading partners. By virtue of being a member of WTO, India is automatically entitled to get the Most Favoured Nation and National Treatment for its exports. WTO also has a strong Dispute Settlement Mechanism to resolve any disputes between members. Under the Agreement on Agriculture (AoA) India's domestic policy options for agricultural and rural development have not been constrained. The experience of the implementation of the AoA has brought out a number of issues, which deserve rebalancing and have already been flagged by India in its comprehensive proposals submitted in WTO as part of the continuing mandated negotiations. The Indian proposals aim at protecting its food and livelihood security and for creating opportunities for the exports of its agricultural surpluses.

In order to ensure that Indian farmers are not put to any hardship, the Government have put in place a suitable mechanism for monitoring of the imports of sensitive items and are committed to providing adequate protection to the domestic producers by resorting to various WTO compatible measures which include appropriate calibration of applied tariffs within the bound tariffs, imposition of anti-dumping, countervailing duties and safeguard action under certain specified circumstances.